

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 76

Mourning the horrific loss of life in January 2009 caused by a landslide in Guatemala and an earthquake in Costa Rica and expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should assist the affected people and communities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 21, 2009

Mr. BURTON of Indiana (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. MACK, Ms. ROSELEHTINEN, Mr. SIRES, Mr. WEXLER, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Ms. LEE of California, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. BERMAN, and Mr. CROWLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Mourning the horrific loss of life in January 2009 caused by a landslide in Guatemala and an earthquake in Costa Rica and expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should assist the affected people and communities.

Whereas, on January 4, 2009, millions of tons of earth fell onto a road in the Alta Verapaz area north of Guatemala City, Guatemala;

Whereas it is suspected that a geological fault triggered the movement of earth, sending 10,000,000 tons of mud and rock down a hillside onto a road that runs from San Cristobal Verapaz to Chicaman, north of Guatemala City;

Whereas at least 38 people have been confirmed dead and up to 60 may be missing, many of whom are coffee workers in the region;

Whereas rescue organizations, volunteers, and agencies from throughout Guatemala had been working at the site until danger of another landslide shut down the operation;

Whereas on January 8, 2009, at 1:21, a 6.1 magnitude earthquake shook the Capital region of San Jose, Costa Rica, including the areas of Sarapiquí, Varablanca, and Poasito;

Whereas the earthquake's epicenter was 20 miles from San Jose at a depth of 21.7 miles and the shaking continued for 40 seconds;

Whereas 20 Costa Ricans have been confirmed dead, over 100 have been treated for injuries, and up to 17 may be missing, including many buried by resulting landslides;

Whereas 518 homes have been destroyed to the point where they are uninhabitable, 26 kilometers of road are unusable, and 61 communities have been affected;

Whereas roads, businesses, government buildings, and the popular tourist sites at the Poas Volcano and the La Paz waterfalls have been severely damaged; and

Whereas Guatemala and Costa Rica have been frequently impacted by significant natural disasters including those in the aftermath of Hurricane Stan in Guatemala in 2005 that led to hundreds of deaths: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) the House of Representatives—

3 (A) mourns the terrible loss of life caused

4 by the landslide that occurred on January 4,

1 2009, in Guatemala and the earthquake on
2 January 8, 2009, in Costa Rica;

3 (B) expresses its deepest condolences to
4 the families of the many victims; and

5 (C) applauds the prompt humanitarian re-
6 sponses to these natural disasters by the Gov-
7 ernments of Guatemala and Costa Rica; and

8 (2) it is the sense of the House of Representa-
9 tives that it should be the policy of the United
10 States—

11 (A) in collaboration with the Government
12 of Guatemala, the Government of Costa Rica,
13 humanitarian organizations, and multilateral
14 development banks in the region, to imme-
15 diately assist as appropriate the Governments
16 of Guatemala and Costa Rica in humanitarian
17 and reconstruction efforts from the January 4,
18 2009, landslide and the January 8, 2009,
19 earthquake;

20 (B) to continue technical assistance to
21 Central American governments in order to
22 strengthen their capacity at the national, pro-
23 vincial, and local levels in the area of disaster
24 management coordination and preparedness, in-
25 cluding implementing information and commu-

1 nications systems to help with the response to
2 natural disasters; and
3 (C) to work closely with the governments
4 of these countries to improve disaster mitiga-
5 tion techniques and compliance among all key
6 sectors of their societies.

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